

# STAKEHOLDERS' PRESENTATIONS

## INTRODUCTIONS

It is a pleasure today to be here to talk about a new era of city-building in the City of Seattle and to listen to your thoughts about issues that need to be addressed in the Station Area Planning process. Many of you are already familiar with the Sound Transit's plans for light rail. These will become a reality because, with voter approval in 1996, 1.9 billion dollars will be spent to design and build the Central Puget Sound link light rail project. Of that 1.9 billion dollars, 1.4 billion will be spent on segments of the light rail system within the City of Seattle. This is probably the biggest single capital investment in Seattle that any of us will see in our lifetimes and it will be important to ensure the best possible fit between the light rail system, any development around the light rail stations, and the neighborhoods where stations are located.

What we want to do today is to [*Modify for specific groups*]:

1. Give you an overview of Sound Transit's plans and the City's role in the process.
2. Explain the station area planning process and its relation to Sound Transit's overall project development schedule.
3. Describe what we mean by "transit-oriented development" and what "transit-oriented development" can do for the City and its neighborhoods; we also will share with you some of the lessons from other cities.
4. Then, we will tell you what will be happening next, particularly our schedule for neighborhood and community meetings.

We hope that you will leave this meeting with a better sense of what the City is doing to prepare for light rail; we also hope to hear from you today, about your concerns and expectations. We want to listen to you, so that our work can respond to your needs. Your feedback is important to us.

Helping me today are representatives from the City and from Sound Transit. (*INTRODUCTIONS TO FOLLOW*)

### ***Overview of Sound Transit's Plans***

Sound Transit's 23-mile long light rail project will connect communities and destinations from Sea Tac Airport to Northgate. The alignments and station locations under study were confirmed by the Sound Transit Board on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Sound Transit is in charge of designing, building, and eventually operating the light rail system. Sound Transit will also take the lead on environmental analysis.

If all goes well, construction could begin in two and a half years (Fall of 2000 ) and service in six years (2004)

### ***Role of the City***

In contrast, the City will oversee planning and development in the areas surrounding the light rail stations and the corridors through which the light rail lines will run. The Station Area Planning process builds on the City's neighborhood planning process, focusing on areas within walking distance of stations. Areas within a ¼ mile of a station can be reached on foot in about 5 minutes; this distance is generally considered a comfortable walking distance from the station

The city will be providing input to Sound Transit based on the findings of the Station Area Planning process. Sound Transit will use the City's recommendations to make choices about the location of the light rail lines and stations. The findings of the Station Area Planning process will also help the City decide what actions to take at each station. The City has to put the right zoning and infrastructure in place in order to encourage the type of development neighborhoods want and discourage what they don't want.

### ***What are the Objectives for Station Area Planning***

There are five key objectives for station area planning.

First, we need to mesh Sound Transit’s plans with neighborhood planning. Through neighborhood planning, individual communities over the past three years have been developing visions for their futures, setting priorities for transportation, housing, open space, and public safety. Some neighborhoods have been focusing on the stations areas and have very specific ideas about what they want to happen. The neighborhood plans are nearly complete and will be adopted by the City Council over the next year. Station area planning will build on these neighborhood plans, focusing on the areas around light rail stations.

Second, we want to take advantage of housing and economic development opportunities where these opportunities fit with citywide goals and neighborhood objectives. With a market study and “reality check” for each station area, we’ll better understand the kinds of activities and services that might be attracted to the light rail station areas and then craft strategies to encourage those activities and services in appropriate areas.

Third, we want to foster new development that supports transit ridership and helps create a pedestrian-friendly, safe environments around stations. We need to tailor the development strategies to individual neighborhoods – a cookie-cutter approach – one size fits all – does not make sense. We need to respect existing neighborhood character. The station area plans will reflect what could happen, lay out policies and actions to support what we want to happen, and recommend decisions to avoid those things we don’t want.

Fourth, we want to identify what public amenities and supportive infrastructure would be needed to make station areas exciting and attractive places. Also, the City and Sound Transit will be working out who will build and pay for the amenities and infrastructure we need for the station areas.

Finally, we want to identify needs for local transit service. This is particularly important because the City and Sound Transit will not be building park-and-ride lots at the transit stations.

## OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Station area planning will be carried out during 1998 and 1999. It will bring together light rail planners and neighborhood property owners, businesses, and community organizations to review the information and to make the best decisions about this exciting new investment in our neighborhoods. Neighbors will not only have opportunities to voice their concerns, but will directly contribute to recommendations for the location of light rail lines and stations and to neighborhood plans. The process will be closely coordinated with the Neighborhood Plan process and Sound Transit's design and engineering.

BOARD: Schedule showing relationship between Neighborhood Plan, Station Area Planning and Sound Transit project development.

There are three steps in the station area planning process:

- 1) **The first step is to establish the planning framework.** To begin the effort, planners are working with neighborhood residents, property owners, and businesses around the proposed light rail stations to understand the market and neighborhood issues that may drive station area planning. We also will be taking a careful look at station area development in other cities to learn from their experiences.
- 2) **The next step is to flesh out planning ideas, prepare and evaluate physical planning concepts and then make choices.** Station area planning will give neighborhoods information that will help make decisions about locations for the light rail lines and stations and make land use and community design plans for the neighborhoods around the stations.
- 3) **The third step will take place in 1999 and will involve taking action so that station area plans can be realized.** Station area planning will mean

something different in every neighborhood. In some, it might involve finding assistance for a single desired project; in others, it might include new design standards or land use plans. Whatever the desired outcome in a particular neighborhood, station area planning will help community organizations, property owners, and businesses work together to make it happen.

This next board gives you a picture of all of the factors that we are considering in the Station Area Planning process.

- Neighborhood planning
- Sound Transit station and route design
- Environmental analysis
- Real estate market studies and development strategies
- Lessons learned from other cities.

BOARD: Process diagram with arrows and Station Area Planning in center

Now, let's take a closer look at what we mean when we say "transit-oriented development" and how this ideas applies to Seattle.

### ***What is transit-oriented development?***

When we think about transit-oriented development, really all we are talking about is a development pattern that has been around for almost a century, for as long as our cities have had light rail lines running through them. In Seattle, streetcar suburbs grew around rail lines that were extended north and south of downtown. Neighborhood commercial centers were often sited around rail stops. With more people and activity on the street, the area around the transit stations sometimes became the central focal point of the neighborhood.

1. Today, transit-oriented development attempts to recreate those older patterns of urban development. Transit-oriented development can

create a neighborhood center, can help revitalize urban communities, and can attract people and activity that create safe, vibrant places to live. Transit-oriented development tends to include: Employment centers, housing, and traditional neighborhood shopping areas, not warehouses, auto repair, or truck stops)

2. Compact land development near stations. The fronts of buildings should come right up to the street, and parking should be located on the side or rear, or no parking.
3. A variety and mix of activities near stations to promote vitality and create a sense of place
4. Attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets and buildings that are at a pedestrian scale and make people feel comfortable walking – no blank walls, views into buildings, eyes on the street help create a feeling of safety.
5. Public amenities - awnings, shelters, benches, good lighting – features that provide comfort and safety.
6. Careful management of parking supply and demand. Some cities have gone so far as to establish parking lots, although that will not necessarily be proposed here.
7. A complete network of walking and biking paths. Places that allow for easy transfers between light rail and buses. .

On this next board, we show some specific transit-oriented development opportunities in Seattle:

- Surface parking lots
- Auto-oriented sites
- Older shopping centers
- Infill sites
- Joint development at express bus and commuter rail station sites.

BOARD: 6 PHOTOS OF OPPORTUNITIES

### ***Station Area Needs***

As we think about what is needed around the Sound Transit stations, it is important to recognize that each station area is unique, and they have different needs, different personalities, and they present different opportunities. This board shows some illustrations of TOD concepts for Seattle.

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BOARD: Sketches of TOD concepts for Seattle from Comprehensive Plan, with annotations.

In the Downtown area, where stations are underground, transit-oriented development may provide direct access from stations to adjacent office buildings. Office development can generally be steered toward station areas, in order to maximize access to downtown work locations. In special districts, such as Pioneer Square or the International District, station-area development can include specialty uses, including specialized retail, entertainment, and restaurants that support the special district. Similarly, stations near university campuses, such as the Pacific Street station, create opportunities for housing and commercial development that supports the University's activities.

In the neighborhoods, where stations may be at grade or on an elevated structure, the opportunities are different.

Finally, in nearby commercial centers served by local transit, the challenge will be to develop strong linkages so these centers gain from the added accessibility that Sound Transit will offer. Examples of such linkages that will need to be developed are in Rainier Beach and Columbia City.

The physical and urban characteristics of neighborhoods also establish certain opportunities and constraints. For example, at North Rainer and McClellan, there are opportunities for significant redevelopment which could support the neighborhood's goal of establishing a town center. Columbia City has a well established downtown and will be concerned about protecting its historic character. Sensitive development and possible design guidelines will be important. In established urban neighborhoods like Capitol Hill or the University District, the concern will be to develop in ways that are consistent with the existing commercial and residential areas.

Lastly, there are going to be stations serving manufacturing or employment centers, which also will call for a different approach to provide for transit-oriented development.

### ***TOD Project Elements Summary***

To sum up, a station area development may include one or more of the following elements: land use controls, siting and building standards, special parking provisions, transportation facilities, and support services. The right mix would depend on the physical characteristics of the area, development trends and market conditions, and the City's priorities and neighborhood needs.

BOARD: Components of TOD, with sketches of elements from the Comprehensive Plan

Now, let's take a closer look at how we the Station Area Planning process might work in one area of the City. This board shows some of the transit-oriented development concepts that have been emerging in the Neighborhood Plan for the University District.

These include:

- Increasing building heights and up-zoning for more density,

- Establishing gateway concepts
- Improving local access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Integrating the Station Area Planning with other linkages, such as the waterfront trail and open space.

BOARD: System map, with example of station concepts from University District Neighborhood Plan.

### ***Land Use Guidelines for TOD***

Within urban urban neighborhoods, we will be developing land use guidelines that are tailored to each neighborhood's needs. They will share some common elements, the basic ideas of transit-oriented development, with a strong focus on the station area.

In this board, we can see the contrast between TOD, with strong street frontages and pedestrian activity and non-TOD development, with auto-oriented frontages and weak station area planning. You also can not that more intensive activities are located closer to the station itself.

BOARD: Land Use Guidelines for Transit-Oriented Development

### ***The Need for Flexibility***

Station area plans will need to be flexible. When station area plans are highly prescriptive – rigid, with strict rules about what must be done - and the market for specific uses is not strong, then transit-oriented

development will not happen. In Washington DC, for example, at the Prince George's Plaza Metro station, one vacant site has stayed vacant for over six years because the Transit Development Overlay Zone only allowed a hotel on this site.

Similarly, if retail is to be encouraged, and there is excess commercial zoning along strips outside the station area, re-zoning these strips along with “upzoning” the station areas may make sense.

### ***Implementation Tools***

Let’s take a look at what tools other cities have used to try to shape development around light rail transit stations. Selecting the right set of tools is critical if our ideas for transit-oriented development are going to be realized. I would like to talk about eight main actions, and how they have been used successfully in other areas. *[SAY, IT HANDOUTS ARE PROVIDED: This overview also is in the TOD Fact sheet, available at the back table.]*

BOARD: matrix of TOD tools in other cities as they relate to station areas in Seattle.
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- **Station Area Planning:** All types of station areas benefit but the real payoffs come when station area planning is supported by strong implementation, financing packages and effective marketing programs, as in Portland, San Jose, and the Hayward and Fruitvale BART station areas. Where station development plans are overly restrictive and do not relate to market conditions, transit-oriented development does not occur.
- **Pedestrian Supportive Infrastructure:** Pedestrian amenities, links with shopping centers as at the El Cerrito and Fruitvale BART stations and improvements, as in Downtown Portland, San Diego, San Francisco and Vancouver, coupled with zoning that requires rain-protection and other amenities, enhances the pedestrian environment. Direct pedestrian connections between new development and rail stations, as in San Diego and San Francisco, improve transit access because they enable people to go directly to the trains without going outside.

- **Parking Management and Shared Parking:** Parking “lids” in Downtown Portland and reduced parking requirements in Sacramento have helped make transit-oriented development viable. Portland actually allows less parking in areas near the MAX light rail stations, and there are no minimum parking requirements. In Sacramento, the State government – the largest employer – wanted to encourage transit use, so it severely limited parking and had aggressive transportation demand management programs. Shared parking structures also have been built, but developers and shopping center owners may be reluctant to participate. Also notable is that BART’s requirement for 1:1 replacement parking has hampered joint development prospects.
- **Zoning and Expedited Development Review:** Overlay districts, use controls, building standards and requirements for pedestrian amenities help tailor zoning to station areas in Portland, Sacramento, and San Diego. Washington law now allows SEPA review to be streamlined. In Vancouver, six regional town centers were established in existing town centers or redevelopment areas to provide compact residential development, commercial centers, community services, and public amenities. Portland not only zoned for higher densities and transit-oriented development, but created interim development standards to prevent undesirable land uses before station area plans were developed. Around the Metro station in Bethesda, Maryland, an optional zoning standard put projects with high-quality construction and public amenities such as open space, public art, and other pedestrian-friendly design factors on a fast-track for permit approval.
- **Public Assistance and Direct Public Investments in Projects:** Redevelopment agencies have helped transit-oriented development in Oakland, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Portland, both with land assembly and financing. Public investments can build confidence in the process and spur additional investments in station areas. Community facilities, such as day care, also help. In Vancouver, redevelopment agencies and the BC Transit Capital Projects Division made infrastructure investments in station areas in order to encourage additional development. The public sector also must be willing to support TOD with economic development policies.
- **Local Transit Service:** Improved bus connections and “timed-transfer” arrangements can help improve access to local businesses and employment centers and housing as well as support Sound Transit’s light rail system. The City of Vancouver and BC Transit rerouted bus service to feed passengers onto Sky Train light rail routes, but at the expense of bus service in some

areas. Local bus service should be coordinated with light rail, not replaced with light rail.

### ***Optional Discussion of TOD Projects in Other Cities***

These last two boards show some specific examples of TOD in other cities:

- San Diego
- San Jose
- Portland
- Buffalo
- Sacramento
- Pleasant Hill

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TWO BOARDS OF TOD PROJECTS.

## **LESSONS FROM OTHER CITIES**

As the City's Station Area Planning Team works with the neighborhoods and community groups, we will keep in mind several lessons from other cities.

1) First, new light rail lines, by themselves, won't automatically bring the kind of activities and services we want. We need to plan for what we want and then attract it with a variety of tools, depending on the particular neighborhood. Investing in streetscape improvements and community facilities may help catalyze other desirable projects around stations. Economic development, local business assistance, housing assistance, and joint marketing efforts also help.

2) Next, transit-oriented development takes time. Because real estate activity works in cycles, it may take dozens of years to see many of the changes envisioned for an area by the station area plan. In the Bay Area, BART has been in service for almost 25 years, and transit-oriented development is only just starting in some areas, while in others, projects started and then were on hold for 10 years. Cities should not feel pressure to say yes to development they may later regret because it is incompatible with the long term vision for the area.

3) And third, these new light rail stations present a challenge in building communities. The City intends to work with all stakeholders in planning for the mix and level of activity around the new stations, so that the station areas are places where people in Seattle want to be, places where people can live, work, and play. Sound Transit is investing in mobility; effective station area planning complements that by making vital places around the stations so there is a reason to use the transit system. It also is important, as they say on Wall Street, to remember that you can't fight the tape – markets are unforgiving. Our plans have to reflect market realities; they also have to be flexible, as I mentioned before, and they probably should be performance-oriented, rather than be based on rigid standards.

4) In Seattle, station area planning will be an evolutionary process. City leadership will be important, but the trust of the private sector, of community leaders and other stakeholders also will be critical if we are to be successful. As station area planning moves forward, all of these tools will be explored to determine how we can best use the new train stations to make our neighborhoods stronger and healthier.

5) At high enough densities, development around the station will support the transit system. The more people that live near the station, the more people will use the light rail line. People also are willing to pay a premium to live or work near transit. What is particularly interesting is what I call the “hedging” phenomenon, that people will pay more for transit-oriented housing, even though they may still want to use their car for many trips. What they want is an option to use transit. So, if we

make this option attractive, and we create the type of pedestrian environment people like, there may be greater use of transit over time.

As I said before, one size doesn't fit all; crafting the right type of development requires a careful look at each station area. What is important to remember as you look at this list, is that all of these elements are part of good "city-building". Recognizing that this is where we want to be, the next question is how will we get there.

### ***Discussion Points***

In closing, I would like to suggest some questions for discussion. As I mentioned at the outset, we want people to be involved in the planning process; we are here to listen. If you want to know more about any aspect of the station area planning program, or have questions about Sound Transit's plans, let us know. We can also put you on the mailing list, if you are not already on it.

First, have we done our job today: do you have a better sense about the process. Do you have any questions about where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish?

How far should the City go in directing the process? Flexibility obviously is important, but the City can provide technical assistance in some station areas, working closely with neighborhood groups. It also may be appropriate to set certain limits on incompatible development, if that is what neighborhood groups want, but these may conflict with the interests of the local business community.

What do you think the priorities should be in station areas? Is housing the key, or should the priority be to get jobs at transit-accessible locations?

Finally, what are your thoughts on how the City can get the best results from this process? What should be done to leverage the Sound Transit investment?

Now, we would like to hear from you.